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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

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JAMAICA

[Original: English]

[18 June 1991]

The Jamaica Defence Force has never been involved in United Nations peace-keeping operations, but has been involved in peace-keeping operations overseas and therefore observations made are as a result of those experiences and a study of experiences of other countries involved with United Nations peace-keeping operations.

Their observations/comments are as follows:

(a) "Peace-keeping is not soldiering but only soldiers can do it." Like most generalities, this has an element of truth in it, but it can be misleading. Peace-keeping is soldiering, if for no better reason than it is a duty assigned to forces by their Governments. Certainly it is different from normal military duty; none the less, it calls for the exercise of all, or most, of the military virtues.

(b) Peace-keeping is good training for war. It requires skilled, disciplined men, good equipment, mobility, sound communications, good leaders and a highly trained staff; so does war.

(c) The control of peace-keeping operations calls for an adequate staff to properly plan peace-keeping missions.

(d) When the headquarters of a peace-keeping or observation mission is established it is the Field Operations Service of the Office of General Services which will be responsible for all aspects of planning, manning and equipping. This includes such items as finding suitable accommodation, planning the organization of the headquarters, supplying communications, clerks, drivers and security guards and all manner of key administrative functions including pay, feeding, medical care, etc. The United Nations does not appear to be able to maintain any pool of equipment or personnel readily available for emergency use. Therefore, when faced with a requirement to man and equip a new mission there is no alternative but to withdraw personnel and equipment from existing missions and dispatch them to the scene of the emergency.

(e) Military men are indoctrinated from their recruit days with certain viewpoints and guiding principles which are applied more or less automatically. Such attitudes and principles are generally oriented to combat situations and they may be largely unsuitable for peace-keeping activities. The military man therefore has to learn to be distrustful of some of his "conditioned reflexes".

(f) Freedom of movement is a major problem for most United Nations forces and it arises in a manner which is likely to be entirely foreign to the experience of the military officer.

(g) The gathering of information remains an essential aspect of the efficiency and security of any peace-keeping force.

(h) Negligent discharges of weapons can be avoided if weapons are kept unloaded.

(i) Firing warning shots is likely to cause tension and should never be permitted.

(j) If new defensive works have caused the tension, orders must be given to destroy such works.

(k) Forces must operate with the following guiding principles:

(1) Act within the law;

(2) Impartiality in all acts;

(3) Justification for all acts;

(4) Use of minimum force always.